

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated July 26, 2006, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. Each of the issues raised in the Office Action is addressed herein.

Allowed Claims/Allowable Subject Matter

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 13-74 are indicated as allowed. Also, claims 4-12 are indicated as reciting allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim (claim 1) and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, while not acceding to the propriety of the rejections of claims 1-3, Applicants have amended claim 1 to incorporate the subject matter of allowable dependent claim 4, and intervening dependent claim 2. Applicants also have cancelled claims 2 and 4, and have amended dependent claims 3 and 5 to adjust dependencies in light of the claim cancellations. Minor amendments to dependent claims 6 and 9 also have been made to adjust dependencies and clarify the recited subject matter.

In view of the foregoing, claims 1, 3, and 5-74 presently are pending, with all claims being allowed or in allowable condition.

Claim Rejections

On page 2, the Office Action indicates that claims 1-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Hochstein (U.S. Patent No. 5,633,629). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. In any case, these rejections are believed to be moot in view of the amendments herein.

Applicants respectfully point out that while claims 4-6 were indicated as rejected in item 3 on page 2 of the Office Action, this appears to be a typographical error; more specifically, only

claims 1-3 are indicated as rejected in item 6 on the Office Action Summary sheet, and only claims 1-3 are discussed in the rejections set forth in the Office Action.

Applicants reserve the right to file one or more continuation applications directed to the subject matter of the claims prior to the amendments herein.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' representative at the telephone number indicated below to discuss any outstanding issues relating to the allowability of the application.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825, reference C1104.70117US00.

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Respectfully submitted,

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